



BLUERIDGE
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

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AGRICULTURE

CRAFT • MUSIC

CHEROKEE

NATURAL HERITAGE



MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area is to protect, preserve, interpret and develop the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of Western North Carolina for the benefit of present and future generations, and in so doing sustain our heritage and stimulate improved economic opportunity for our region.

MESSAGE *from the Board Chair*



Greetings from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership board and staff. The coming year promises to be both busy and creative as we step forward into a new phase of work and commitment to our region.

Since our first year of operation in 2004, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership has completed its ten-year Management Plan, established an office in the the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, and provided multiple programs supportive of our craft, music, agricultural, Cherokee and natural heritage.

Last spring the board began a planning process—Forward! Focused for the Future—to develop a 3 to 5 year strategic plan. We are focused on advancing the Heritage Area mission through partnerships at the regional, state and national levels while aspiring to become a national model for Heritage Area and National Park partnerships.

We are looking forward to this year being a year of possibilities, of positive energy and of increased service to the region we love. A region that is crafted of ridgelines and green valleys and embroidered by resourceful, hard-working and creative citizens. We encourage you to join us in this exciting and important endeavor.

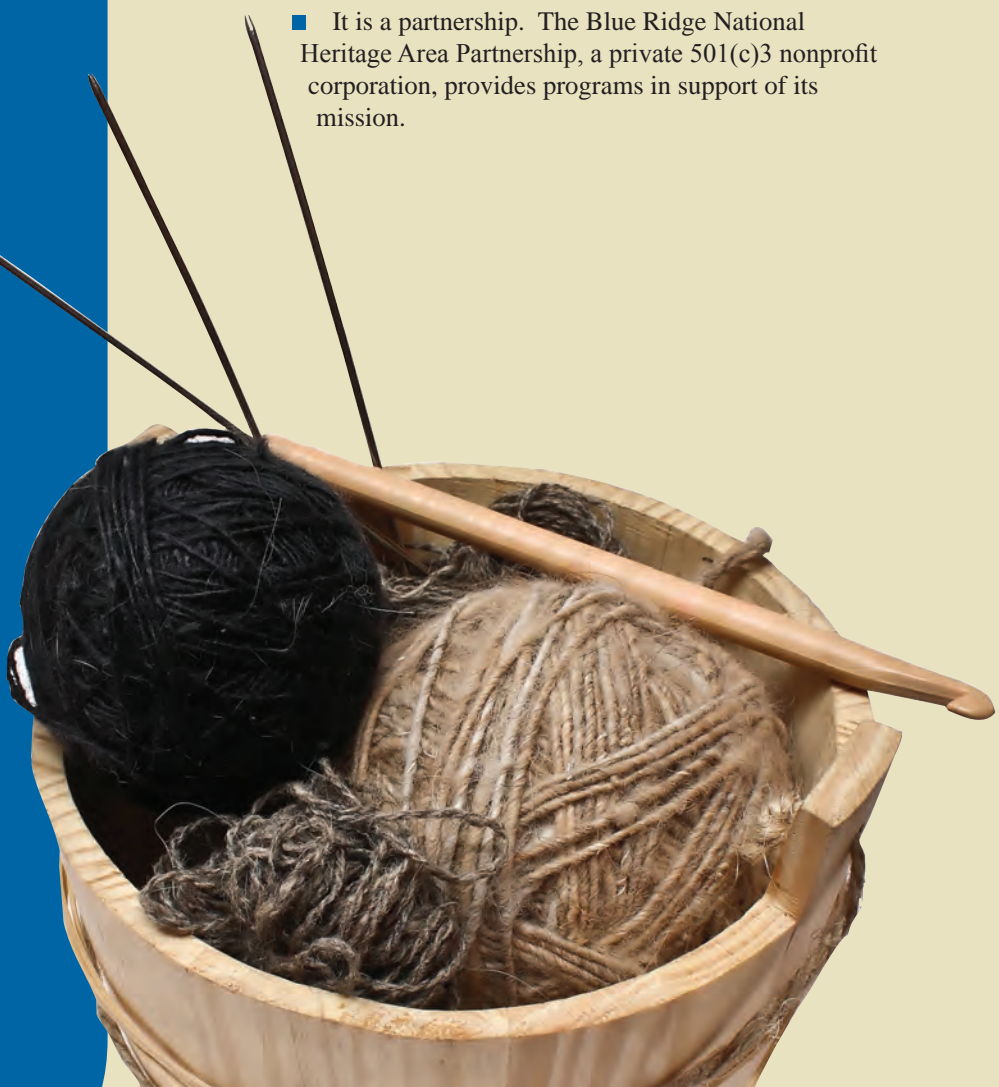
Becky Anderson
Chairman

OVERVIEW

In designating Western North Carolina as a National Heritage Area in 2003, Congress recognized that the cultural and natural resources of the region have played a significant role in the history of the United States and the state of North Carolina. The federal authorizing legislation cited as nationally significant our spectacular Natural Heritage and four cultural themes: Agriculture, Craft, Music, and Cherokee Heritage.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area is actually two things:

- It is a geographical region that comprises 25 counties in Western North Carolina and includes the Qualla Boundary, the Cherokee reservation, and covers almost 11,000 square miles in the mountains and piedmont of the state.
- It is a partnership. The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, a private 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, provides programs in support of its mission.



A B R I E F H I S T O R Y

of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

Since its inception in 2003, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership has worked with partners throughout the region to inventory existing heritage assets, evaluate projects for further development, and encourage cooperative initiatives regionally and across county lines. This started with the development of County Heritage Councils, a grassroots effort to engage the people of Western North Carolina in a planning process that would ultimately guide the development of a 10-year management plan for the BRNHA.

These councils comprised volunteers from many disparate organizations who shared at least one thing—a desire to protect, preserve and share the rich heritage of the North Carolina mountains and foothills. They came from non-profits organizations, town and county governments, COGs, tourism groups, chambers of commerce, attractions, the National Park Service, agricultural extension agencies, conservation groups, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, area colleges and universities, US Forest Service, and many other organizations.

S T R A T E G I C P L A N N I N G

The board and staff of the BRNHA Partnership undertook a major strategic planning initiative with Leslie Anderson Consulting. Beginning in March 2010, three planning meetings were held in which participants examined the mission of the BRNHA, and arrived at a Vision Statement and a definition of the BRNHA's distinctive niche. The decision was made to add the word "Partnership" to the name of the nonprofit management entity to clarify the difference between the region and the organization. Also, desired outcomes in five core areas were determined, and strategies and action steps to achieve them were defined. The board adopted the Strategic Plan in September 2010.

P A R T N E R S H I P D E V E L O P M E N T

The BRNHA has sought to enhance partnerships with a number of private and public organizations, including the NC Department of Cultural Resources, NC Department of Natural Resources, NC Department of Commerce, conservation and planning organizations, regional tourism Host Groups, historic and arts councils, and other new and emerging partners.

B O A R D M E M B E R S 2 0 1 0

Becky Anderson | Board Chair, Becky Anderson Consulting, appointed by HandMade in America.

John Cooper | Retiring Board Chair, President of Mast General Stores, appointed by the Governor.

Cathy Robbins | Vice Chair, Marketing Director, Tweetsie Railroad, appointed by the Governor.

Bill Gibson | Secretary, Executive Director, Southwestern Commission, appointed by the Governor.

John Hunter | Treasurer, attorney and Executive Director of the Education & Research Consortium of the Western Carolinas, appointed by that group.

Joyce Dugan | Superintendent of Cherokee Central School System, appointed by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Harry Harrison | Executive Director, YMI Cultural Center, appointed by AdvantageWest Economic Development Group.

Larry Kernea | Murphy Electric Power Board, appointed by AdvantageWest Economic Development Group.

Elizabeth Russell | Interim Executive Director, HandMade in America, appointed by HandMade in America.

S T A F F

Angie Chander Executive Director
Rob Bell Director of Programs
Beth Coleman Office & Technology Manager
Amy Hollifield Volunteer and Events Coordinator
Jill Jones ...Director of Marketing & Communications
Ray Bratsch Comptroller
Aprill Rhodes Information Desk Host
Anne Elliott Information Desk Host



LIVING TRADITIONS

Pr Campaign

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area partnership had many successes in 2010 in garnering national and statewide media coverage of the Living Traditions of the Blue Ridge." **Stories include:**

- **USA Today** - "Top 10 Fall Foliage Drives Around the USA."
- **SmarterTravel.com** - "Top 10 Fall Foliage Drives Around the USA."
- **National Geographic Adventure** - "Ten Best Hikes on Blue Ridge Parkway."
- **UNC-TV NC Weekend** - "Tryon Wine Weekend."
- **Atlanta Journal-Constitution** - Travel feature on Blowing Rock.
- **Backpacker Magazine** - Pisgah Forest Hikes and hikes from BRP with images of views from BRP.
- **Chicago Sun-Times** - "Blue Ridge Parkway's Pleasures are in the Journey."
- **MSNBC** - "The Diamondback Motorcycle & Sports Car Route."
- **Charlotte Observer & Raleigh News & Observer** - Front cover of GuestQuest insert.
- **UNC-TV NC Weekend** - Two shows featuring Graham County.
- **Our State Magazine** - Several stories to appear in future editions, about Graham County, Cherokee, and Cherokee artist Karen George.
- **Trailblazer Magazine** - (RV audience) Cover Story, "Base Camp Asheville – Ten Varied Hikes Along the Parkway."
- **Camping Life Magazine** - Story on fall camping in GSMNP.
- **SuiteTrip.com** - The Suite Deals: Round-Up of the Summer's Best Family Travel Deals.
- **Romanticasheville.com** - Free cultural summer events in the BRNHA, Little Switzerland's Centennial and Diamondback, Emerald Village, NC Minerals Museum, Spruce Pine and Linville Caverns.
- **Book: 100 Places in the USA Every Woman Should Go** - To be published in Spring 2011 by Travelers Tales –Nina Simone and Tryon included.

NEW MEDIA PARTNERS - In October, 2009, the BRNHA formed a three-way partnership with **WNC Magazine** and **WNCW public radio** to produce and air short vignettes called "Living Traditions Moments." The pieces are written by BRNHA staff and freelance writers, recorded by Eric Seeger, then editor in chief of the magazine, and produced and aired on **WNCW** on Friday evenings. These pieces will also be used on the "Sights and Sounds" section of our website.

NEW AND IMPROVED VISITOR MAP BROCHURE - The large, folded visitor map brochure was revised to include new photos and additional sites and websites. A second print run of 100,000 doubled the first run, and will meet expanded distribution through two distribution services in Western North Carolina and Virginia. The brochures are also in the Asheville and Charlotte airports and are used to fulfill responses to advertising. It is available on our website and on visitnc.com as a downloadable brochure.

SIGNAGE - The signage program gathered steam, and we are working hard toward the goal of installing the full number of signs that were included in the NC Department of Transportation enhancement grant. Marilyn Ball with *12 Twelve Collaborative Solutions* has assisted in coordinating the project.

ADVERTISING - In addition to brand advertising in travel guides and directories, including the **NC Travel Guide**, **Asheville Visitor Guide** and **Blue Ridge Parkway Guide** and map, the BRNHA supported cooperative advertising campaigns by Smoky Mountain Host and Blue Ridge Mountain Host. We also became charter members of the Gozaic website of **Heritage Travel, Inc.**, a subsidiary of the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**.

TRADITIONAL ARTIST DIRECTORY

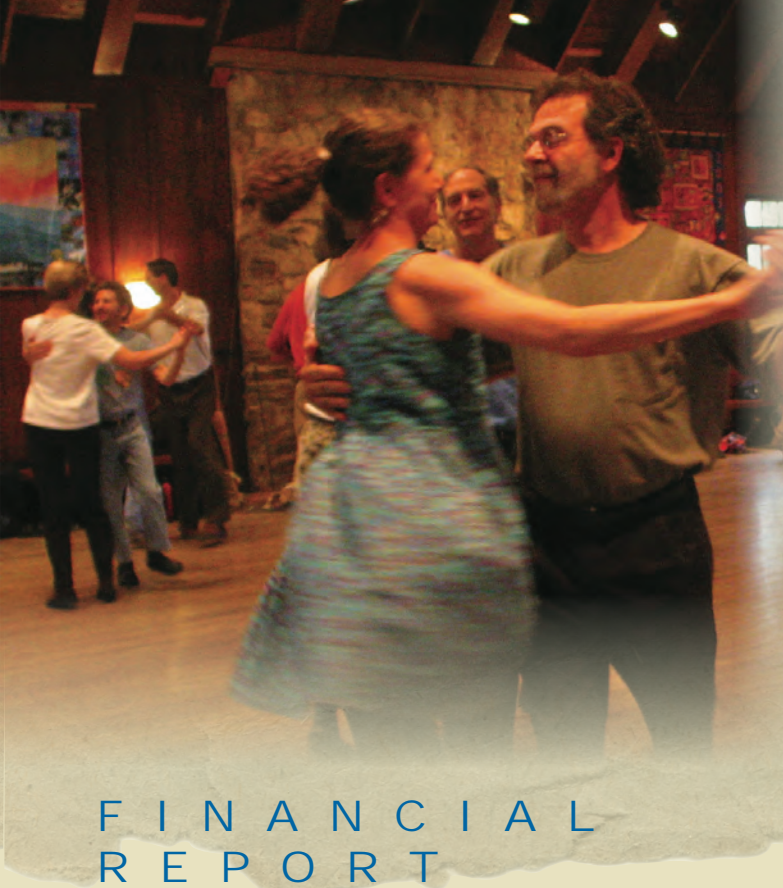
This year, the **North Carolina Folklife Institute** and its partner organizations developed nearly 100 new nominations for the **Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Traditional Artist Directory**. Many of the nominations are for past masters who have had a great influence on artists and musicians working and performing today. The new nominations will be added to the directory on the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area website later this year.

WEBSITE - We launched a new mini-website optimized for use by mobile devices.

VISITOR SERVICES - The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's Information Desk at the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center in Asheville is staffed by 32 volunteers, led by Volunteer and Events Coordinator Amy Hollifield. Between October 1, 2009, and September 30, 2010, the Center hosted over 88,000 visitors, and our volunteers gave over 1,300 hours of their time.

EDUCATION - We partnered with WNC Nonprofit Pathways to sponsor a spring workshop, "Nonprofit Financial Management."

SPECIAL EVENTS - The BRNHA was a major sponsor of several special events held in celebration of the Blue Ridge Parkway's 75th Anniversary. We had representatives and a display at three NC Welcome Centers during National Tourism Week. We assisted the Blue Ridge Parkway in hosting the welcome reception and listening sessions for President Obama's "America's Great Outdoors Initiative."



FINANCIAL REPORT

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership has received federal funding annually through the Heritage Partnerships Program of the National Park Service since 2003.

INCOME

Federal Appropriation \$737,000

EXPENSES

Marketing & Visitor Services \$215,000

Planning \$15,000

Grants \$150,000

Administration and Operations \$357,000

In FY 2010, BRNHA received a federal appropriation of \$737,000.

The BRNHA Partnership is matching and leveraging the FY 2010 federal appropriation through partnerships with the state government, local governments, and private organizations.

Leverage

State (projected)
\$145,000

Local & Private \$610,000

**Total Match &
In Kind Support:**
\$755,000

The fiscal year for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership is from October through September.

GRANTS

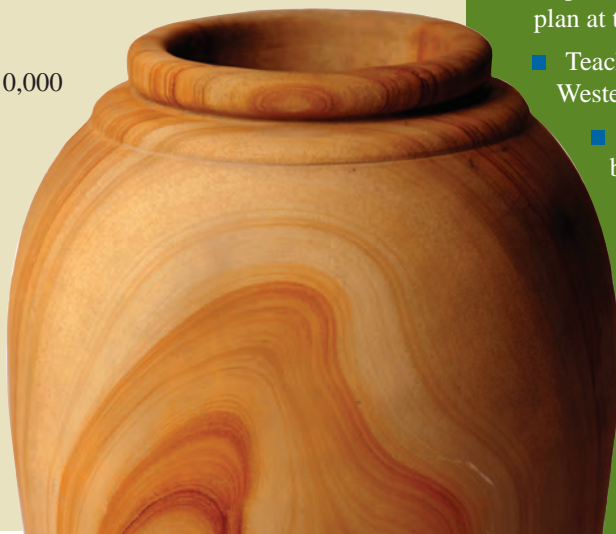
Some region-wide initiatives that have been supported by BRNHA in 2010:

- Junior Appalachian Musicians resource program.
- A public awareness campaign by the Blue Ridge Forever land conservancy consortium.
- Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary signature events.

BRNHA grants for the year 2010:

- Cherokee winter house exhibit at Nelson Heritage Park in Hayesville.
- Cultural history exhibits at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
- Repair and stabilization of the century-old barn at the Historic Carson House in McDowell County.
- Creation of an Old-Time Music Heritage Hall in Mount Airy.
- Native trees/flora exhibit at the W. Scott Kerr Dam visitor center in Wilkes County.
- Boarding house renovations at Historic Johnson Farm in Henderson County.
- Exhibit at Smith-McDowell House Museum in Buncombe County highlighting family relationships to the land.
- Master plan for the Mill Creek Greenway in Old Fort.
- Development of a large format interpretive map of the North Carolina Bartram Trail.
- Oral history project for preservation and tourism promotion in McDowell County.
- Documentary film on the conservation of the World's Edge tract by the Carolina Mountain Conservancy in Henderson & Rutherford counties.
- Entrance improvements and pedestrian plan for the Cowee-West Mill National Historic District in Macon County.
- Digital media showcasing Cherokee crafts and traditions by the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University.
- Implementation of a strategic marketing plan at the Stecoah Valley Arts Center.
- Teaching of local, historical traditions of pottery production at Western Piedmont Community College in Burke County.
- Branding of locally-produced ramp & cornmeal products by Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association in Graham County.
- Agri-tourism promotion by the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project.

Overall, since its inception, the BRNHA has awarded 78 grants totaling more than \$1.2 million. These awards have leveraged nearly \$2.2 million in non-federal matches.





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www.blueridgeheritage.com